

THE PROMISED—AND PROVIDED—SAVIOR

If my memory serves me right, this is at least the **third year** in a row that I've left up the **props from VBS**—and preached a message from the theme of VBS!

This year's theme—**obviously** (hopefully?)—was Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden! Although there are not an **infinite number** of messages that can be preached from the **first three** chapters of Genesis, there are **certainly** a large number! I'll be preaching from Genesis 3 this morning, but I want us to **begin with** Gen 1.

In Genesis 1:1, we have the **declaration** from God that God created the heaven and the earth.

Was **anyone alive** before the earth was created? **No! No one—except God, of course!**

--**Psalm 90:2** "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even **from everlasting to everlasting**, thou art God." Since God is **from everlasting**, He has **always been!**

--And since God is **to everlasting**, He **always will be!**

--And since God **was there when He created** the heavens and earth, we should **believe what He says** about **how** He did it!

Please follow along as I read **Genesis 2:1**. So if **Genesis 1:1** starts out with God **creating** the heaven and the earth—and **Genesis 2:1** says God was **finished** creating the heaven and the earth—then Genesis 1 is all about **how** He created! I mentioned to the children this week that I think it is a waste of **time**—and **money**—to try to figure out **where people came from** by studying **dust** from **the moon** or a **rock from Mars**. We **already know** where we came from! Am I being "simple-minded"—or Biblical? **Biblical**, right?

In Genesis 2, we also have the details of the creation of man...and them being placed in the garden of Eden...and the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...and the consequences of disobeying God's command.

In Genesis 3, we have Satan's temptation of Eve...the disobedience of Adam and Eve...and God's pronouncements of judgment upon Satan, Eve, Adam, and the ground itself. For the sake of context, please follow along as I read Genesis 3:14-21. Rather than focus on these **pronouncements**, though, we will be looking primarily at the **promise** God makes in Genesis 3:15. The title of my message—for those of you listening on-line—is: "The Promised—and Provided—Savior."

Notice again Genesis 3:15. This verse is what theologians often refer to as *protoevangelium* (proto= evangelium). What does that mean? It's a combination of the Greek word "proto"—which means "first;" and "euangelion"—which means "good news." In other words, Genesis 3:15—if understood properly—is the first time God's Word mentions the **good news** of a coming Savior!

1. God's Promise of a Savior

Before we look specifically at the promise—which is at the **end** of the verse—I want us to think through what God says in the **beginning** of the verse.

A. The pronouncements of a spiritual battle

--"And I will put enmity [meaning hatred and hostility] **between thee** and the woman"

--**Who** is God talking to? It **doesn't exactly say** in verse **15**, but it does say in **verse 14!** "And the LORD God said unto the **serpent**" (vs 14) that there would be hostility between **the serpent** and Eve.

So did that mean Eve would **hate snakes**? **No**; that's not what it means!

--This serpent wasn't just "any ole serpent," was it? This animal—whatever it was **before God cursed it**—was used **by Satan** to cause Eve to **doubt** God's Word—and **disobey** God's command!

--So God is talking **to Satan** and tells him there is going to be an ongoing hatred—and spiritual battle—between the devil and Eve! Although we can't say for sure, my guess is that **Adam and Eve** heard what God said to Satan—and Satan heard what God said to Adam and Eve!

--But the battle wouldn't end **when Eve died**, right? How do we know?

--Because the enmity—the animosity and hatred and spiritual battle—would continue between **"the seed of the serpent" and "the seed of the woman."**

So next let's consider... B. The "parties" in this spiritual battle

1) The "seed" of Satan. "I will put enmity between **thy seed** and **her seed**..."

--Does this phrase mean that Satan is going to have **literal, physical offspring**? **No**; it doesn't!

--In Mt 12:34, Jesus refers to the Pharisees as a "generation of vipers." **Why?** Because they were "**snake-like**" in appearance? **No**; because they were **evil in their hearts** and they were not children of God!

--In John 8:44, Jesus says to some Jewish religious leaders that they were "of their father, the devil." Does that mean Satan cohabited with women who had baby demons that became the religious leaders of Jesus' day?

--**No!** It means their **spiritual life** was the same as that of Satan—rebellious against God and enemies of God!

2) The "seed of the woman." Does this **mean literal, physical** offspring? **Yes!** We see that in **Genesis 4:25**

"And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath **appointed me another seed** instead of Abel, whom Cain slew."

So we see that "seed" here refers to a son that "took the place of" (in a sense) Abel. But there is also a **spiritual element** in this battle, and we see that in the same verse because one of her children **were evil**—and one **was not!** And the spiritual battle between good and evil...and between those who are godly and those who are not...and between the devil (and demons) against those who love and follow God, has **not ended**—and **will not end**—until we have a **new heaven** and a **new earth!**

3) The "it" of Genesis 3:15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; **it shall bruise thy head**..."

--Isn't that interesting? God goes from talking about the **seed** of the woman—which would include **many**—to "it." It doesn't say, "**they**"—meaning **many** of the woman's offspring—would bruise (meaning crush) Satan's head. It says "**it**"—meaning **One** of the woman's offspring.

--Who was that unique "seed"? **Jesus**, right? We know that because we have **the completed Bible**. But Adam and Eve wouldn't have known that!

C. The plan to end this spiritual battle

--So **how** would this ongoing battle between Satan and mankind **end**?

--"**...it** [the unique seed of the woman] **shall bruise thy head**..." I found it interesting to learn that the Hebrew word "bruise" comes from is used only **four** times in the Bible—and **two** of them are in this verse!

--It means to "break, bruise, crush, or overwhelm." (Lexical summary in Biblehub.com)

--A **bruised head** is a **crushed head**—and a crushed head is a **defeated** head! Who delivered a "crushing blow" to the **head** of Satan? **Jesus** did when He died on the cross and paid the penalty for sin!

--But **how** did the **death** of Jesus bring a **death-blow** to Satan? **Hebrews 2:14** "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He [Jesus] also Himself likewise took part of the same; **that through death** He [Jesus] **might destroy him** that had the power of death, that is, **the devil**;"

--Heb 2:14 confirms what Gen 3:15 says—that Jesus **would crush** Satan's head—but it still doesn't say **how!**

--Not only that, Satan's head doesn't **seem to be crushed** when he is still **alive and active**—and there is still **sin and death!** And in what sense did Satan **have** ("had" past tense) **the power of death** like it says in Hebrews 2:14—meaning he doesn't have it anymore? I am going to come back and answer these questions a little later in the sermon.

Next, let's consider... **2. God's Provision of a Sin-Covering for Adam and Eve**

--**What** did Adam and Eve **do** in an attempt **to cover** their guilt and shame? We have the answer in Genesis 3:7; notice what it says in Genesis 3:7.

--Was God **satisfied** with their efforts to cover their guilt? **Obviously not!**

--How do we know? Because God provided them with something different to wear! We see that in Genesis 3:21 "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make **coats of skins**, and clothed them."

--How do you get coats of skins? By **killing animals**, right?

--Did the **death of the animal** take away their sins? **No**; it was a **temporary** covering—a **partial payment** of sorts—until the **permanent payment** was made. But there are **three** important truths to be learned from God making Adam and Eve coats of skins: 1) God provided the covering because their way was not satisfactory.

- 2) Sin requires a payment—it is not just forgotten or ignored.
- 3) The payment for sin requires death—either the death of the **guilty** one, or the death of a **substitute**.

Next, let's consider... **3. God's Pronouncements Regarding the Sin-offerings Under the Law**

Take your Bibles and turn now to Hebrews 10—way in the back of your Bibles.

--Notice what it says in vs 1. "For the law" [the sacrificial system of offering animals] "having a shadow" [being a picture] "of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, **can never with those sacrifices** which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."

--I don't know that we can truly grasp the **number of animals** that were sacrificed under the Old Testament sacrificial system directed by God through Moses.

--There were **daily** sacrifices...and annual **feast** sacrifices.

--There were also sacrifices that were made on **behalf of people when they sinned**.

--And there were a staggering number of sacrifices—142,000—when the **temple was finished** and dedicated!

1 Kings 8:63 "And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the Lord, **two and twenty thousand oxen**, and an **hundred and twenty thousand sheep**. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord."

--Regardless of the number of sacrifices, the end result was **the same**. Those that offered these sacrifices weren't **made perfect**. In other words, their sin was not forgiven.

--Now vs 2. "For then would they not have ceased to be offered?" If animal sacrifices were satisfactory—if they paid the full payment for sin—you wouldn't have to keep offering them!

Notice what the rest of the verse says: "...because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins."

Here's a paraphrase that will hopefully help. 'If the animal sacrifices permanently took care of your sins, you would stop offering them because the penalty had been paid—and your guilt would be gone because you knew you were forgiven!'

--Vs 3. Simply put, every time you made a sacrifice you were reminded that the punishment for your sins was **still incomplete!** And then—just to make sure we are 100% convinced that the sacrifices of animals can't take away sins—we have verse 4!

--Vs 4. "For it is **not possible** that the blood of bull and of goats should take away sins"—meaning satisfactorily pay for sins! So the animals that were sacrificed to provide clothes for Adam and Eve—and all the animals sacrificed after that—were nothing more than a **temporary covering** for the penalty of sin!

And that should make you **humble—and thankful**. **Why?**

--Because if the death of **a lamb** could take away your sins, you are only worth **the price of a lamb!**

Ken Ham from "Answers in Genesis" put it like this: "Humans are not just animals—we are made in God's image. No animal was made in God's image. **Only a human**—but it would have to be a **perfect** human—could pay the penalty for our sin." (*Creation to Babel*, pg 130, emphasis mine).

And although Ken Ham wrote this quote, he was really only re-stating what **God's Word** says!

--Genesis 1:27 declares that we are **made in God's image**: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them."

And the requirement of a **perfect human** comes from verses like:

--1 Corinthians 5:21 "For He [God] hath made Him [Jesus] to be sin for us, **who knew no sin**; that we might be made [might have] the righteousness of God in Him [Jesus]."

--1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, **the just for the unjust**, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:"

4. God's Provision of Himself as the Savior

--You're still in Hebrews 10; look now at verse 5. I shared this verse with the children—and VBS helpers—on Friday, but the thought blessed my heart so much I want to share it with all of you!

--Vs 5. "Wherefore when **He** cometh into the world, **He** saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not..."

--**Who** is being quoted? In other words, **Who** is the “He” that came into the world? It **doesn’t say** in this verse, but we certainly can figure it out! In the end of vs 5, He says “a body hast thou prepared for me.” In vs 7—and 9—this same Person says that He has come to do God’s will! And if we haven’t figured it out by now, the end of vs 10 refers to “the offering of the body of **Jesus Christ**...”

The speaker, then, in verse 5 is **Jesus!** Look at the verse again. **Who** is Jesus **talking to** when He says, “Sacrifice and offering **thou** wouldst [meaning “desire”] not...” Who is the “**thou**”? God the Father, right?

--So Jesus—when He came into the world—says to the Father, ‘You don’t want me to go to earth and sacrifice more animals.’ And He says the same thing in a slightly different way in verse 6: ‘You have no pleasure in—you are not satisfied with—“burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin.”’

Back to vs 5. Again—paraphrasing—Jesus says to the Father when He came into the world, ‘You don’t desire sacrifice and offering! Instead, you prepared for me a body!’

--Vs 7. “Then said I [Jesus], Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,), to do thy will, O God.”

--Paraphrasing again: ‘I am coming to do your will—and your will involves me having a body!’

--And let’s not miss what’s in the parentheses: “in the volume of the book it is written of me.” In other words, ‘The Old Testament is full of references about Me (Jesus) coming to earth in a body!’

--Vs 8 is a repetition of verses 5 and 6.

--In vs 9, we have a repetition of the first part of vs 7. But in the middle of the verse, we have the words: “He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second.” **What** does that mean? Simply put, Jesus came to **do away with** the sacrifice of animals—that only **temporarily covered** sins—to **permanently pay** for the penalty of sins!

And that **permanent payment** was the sacrifice of Himself!

--Now vs 10. “By the which will”—by God’s will that Christ take on a body and come to earth—and by Christ’s willingness to do that—“we are sanctified”—set apart as being holy—“through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

As we look at the next few verses, it is impossible to miss **the insufficiency** of the animal sacrificial system—and **the sufficiency** (the “permanent-ness”) of what Christ accomplished on our behalf!

--Vs 11. “And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which **can never take away sins**.” Here’s the **insufficiency of animal sacrifices** because they merely covered sins.

--Vs 12. “But this man [Jesus], after He had offered one sacrifice [Himself] for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;”

--Priests in the temple **never sat down** because their work was never done.

--But **Jesus sat** because the offering of Himself needed to **be done only once**—and the results **lasted forever!**

--In vs 13, we see what Jesus is **doing at** the right hand of God. **What** is He doing? **Waiting** for the day when His enemies—Satan included—become His footstool.

--Vs 14. “For by **one** offering [Himself] “He hath perfected” [made complete] “for ever them that are sanctified” [set apart].” Isn’t that great? Because of the **permanent sufficiency** of Jesus’ death, those of us who are saved are set apart by God and are **already—and forever**—considered in our completed state—even though we aren’t there yet!

Turn now to Hebrews 2 where we have a verse we looked at earlier. Notice again what it says in vs 14. I’m going to answer now the question I posed earlier: In what sense did the death of Jesus “destroy” the devil’s power over death—even though there is still sin and death?

5. Satan’s power over death has been destroyed

A. In what sense did Satan have power over death?

--Does **Satan control** life and death? No; **God does!**

--Can Satan **take someone’s life** whenever he wants to?

--No; we know that from the book of Job. Satan **could only do** what God gave him permission to do.
--But Satan **had power over death** in the sense that he **instigated what brought it about!** Death came because of sin—and he was the first “being” that sinned! And because of his hatred for God, Satan attacked that which was nearest and dearest **to the heart of God**—people!

So leading Adam and Eve into sin—and knowing they would be punished for sin—made Satan the **author of death**, so to speak.

B. In what way did Jesus’ death destroy Satan’s power?

--Although Satan instigated death, death does not have the last word!

--People are not **hopelessly destined** for an eternity separated from God—they **can be rescued** from the power of darkness (and death) and become God’s children by trusting in the sacrifice that He Himself provided.

--Not only that, Jesus **demonstrated His power** over death by rising from the dead!

--And **death itself will also be destroyed** some day! 1 Corinthians 15:26 “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Revelation 20:4 also says, “...and there shall be no more death.”

--And—praise the Lord—Revelation 20:10 states: “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be **tormented day and night for ever and ever.**”

--So Satan’s plan to permanently drive a wedge between mankind and God has been defeated because God provided Himself as our sacrifice!

Yes—**the heel** of Christ was bruised—when He was crucified on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins! But the **head of Satan** has been crushed, and he is a defeated foe!

Before I close in prayer, let’s consider what would God have us do in light of what we’ve heard this morning.

1. First and foremost, we should be absolutely 100% convinced that there is **only one** satisfactory payment for the punishment of our sins—the sacrifice of Jesus!

No wonder Acts 4:12 says, “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

So if you are not trusting in Christ—and Christ alone to forgive you and save you—you need to humble yourself...and repent...and receive Christ today!

2. Second, we are in a spiritual battle—and will be until we leave this earth!

--So don’t be apathetic—be alert!

--And don’t be discouraged—be determined to continue to fight the good fight!

3. Third, be joyful if you belong to Christ—you are on the Victor’s side!

4. Lastly, ask God to burden you for the lost. Don’t keep the good news to yourself!